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Special Notice

We are intending the next issue to reduce the number of sample copies which we have been sending out in the past. If those who have been receiving sample copies desire THE LEAFLET to come to their addresses they will kindly send us the subscription price. Those who have not paid their subscription for the past four years may also send us one dollar. Every penny of this money goes into the Scholarship Fund.

The Last May-Meeting of the Latin Club

At the last meeting of the Latin Club, held in May, at the Hotel Albert, the following officers were elected: President H H Bice; vice-president, E W Given; secretary, Archibald L Hodges; treasurer, Eugene W Harter; censor, H F Towle. The club was then addressed by Professor Charles Knapp, who spoke as follows on:

Form in Latin Poetry

IN THREE PARTS—PART I

The writer of the article on poetry in the Encyclopedia Britannica held that "in discussing poetry questions of versification touch the very root of the matter". Again he says, "The theory that versification is not an indispensable requisite of a poem seems to have become nearly obsolete in our time", and again, putting the same thought positively, "many critics are agreed that without metre and without form there can be no poetry". Lastly he remarks, "By the poets themselves metre was always considered to be the one indispensable requisite of a poem". Mr Gummere (Handbook of Poetics, p 1) declares that "metre or rhythm is the distinguishing or necessary mark of poetry. Aristotle and his school maintained that 'invention' was the soul of poetry. The substance, say they, is the main thing. But later criticism asserts that in poetry form (metre) is the principal requisite. A late writer has declared that 'metre is the first

and only condition absolutely demanded by poetry'".

It is not our province to inquire whether these statements are as universally applicable as their authors would have us believe: for Greek and Latin poetry, at least, we must accept them in their entirety, inasmuch as among the Greeks and the Romans poetry was always distinguished from prose by the possession of elaborate rhythmical or metrical form. Cicero says somewhere, *effugimus in oratione poematis similitudinem*. In the third book of the *De Oratore* he discusses at length the part which rhythmical cadence should play in prose. In section 175 he says: "In this connection it is of the utmost importance to note that if in prose the words are so arranged that a complete verse is produced, our writing is open to criticism, and yet we would have the words so ordered and combined that they shall possess a rhythmical cadence, that they shall fit well into the places assigned to them, and that the language as a whole shall be well-rounded". In the *Orator*, sections 179-182, Cicero discusses in a general way the nature of rhythm: in sections 183-187 he asks whether there is such a thing as rhythm in prose, and, if there is, what its nature is; in sections 188-190 he asks what rhythms may be used in prose: and lastly, in sections 191-198, he asks what kinds of rhythm are appropriate to the different kinds of prose. Two remarks at least deserve quotation here: one from section 189 *versus saepe in oratione per imprudentiam dicimus, quod vehementer vitiosum est*, the other from section 194 *aliud enim quiddam est oratio nec quicquam inimicius quam illa versibus, "prose and poetry are sworn foes"*. Harken to the *Orator* again, section 172: "In all the long list of authorities who has greater learning, greater

penetration than Aristotle? Who is more incisive than he in invention, in criticism? This great authority lays down the doctrine that in prose there shall be rhythm, but not verse (*Is igitur versum in oratione vetat esse, numerum iubet*). His pupil Theodectes has the same feeling and enunciates the same rule: Theophrastus discusses the same matters even more minutely". The Aristotelian dictum in question may be found in the *Rhetoric*, iii § 3.

In entire accord with Cicero is Quintilian's discussion in ix 4 52 ff. We need quote but a single sentence, from section 72: "The occurrence of an entire verse in prose writing is a very serious blemish: the appearance of part of a verse is disfiguring enough".

Throughout these passages we may note the careful differentiation of the terms *versus* and *oratio*: we may recall the other term *oratio soluta* and the later word *prosa*. We may compare also the fact that ancient critics were keen to detect verses or parts of verses in prose pieces, even in cases like that to be found at the opening of the *Praefatio* to Livy's history (*facturusne operae pretium sim*): here Quintilian (ix 4 74) sees the beginning of a hexameter, though to one trained in our modern modes of pronouncing words in prose there is no trace of verse form. (On the tendencies of modern scholars to see verses or parts of verses in Latin prose writings see Reid on Cicero *Academica*, i 30, Nipperdey on Tacitus, *Annals*, i 1).

The inference that in Roman belief metrical form was "an indispensable requisite of a poem" is irresistible. Even such passages as Horace *Sermones* i 4 39-62 and Cicero, *Orator* 67, which insist that more than mere metrical form is implied by the terms *poet* and *poetry* when those terms are used with care and discrimination, do not militate against the point urged above, for both passages recognize metrical form as part of the qualifications of true poetry.

The importance of metrical form to the Romans may be realized by an appeal to other considerations. It has been well remarked that the ancients read with their ears as well as with their eyes. This remark is well illustrated by the story told by Julius Montanus that certain lines of the *Aeneid* which in themselves seemed dull and flat acquired a new charm when recited by Vergil himself. The story means, obviously, that Vergil's verses were meant as much, perhaps, more, for delivery than for mere reading, that their appeal was to the ear as to the eye, that by consequence much of their effectiveness was derived from proper attainment of metrical effects. The prac-

tice of public recitation of nascent works, a practice introduced, as is well known, before the publication of the *Georgics*, and so antedating all the more ambitious poetical productions of the Augustan Age, was no doubt of immense importance here; orators, historians and poets alike had ever before their minds as they wrote the audience to whose critical ears they must make their initial appeal.¹

How critical those ears were may be seen from what Cicero says in the *Orator*, section 214, of a speech which he hears C. Papirius Carbo deliver. With consummate skill, says Cicero, Carbo, in an impassioned atmosphere to Marcus Drusus, employed in succession various rhythmical clausulae, ending his period with the dichoreic word *comprobavit*. *Hoc dichoreo*, says Cicero, *tantus clamor continis excitatus est ut admirabile esset*. *Quaero nunc id numerus effecerit?* "Change the order of the words", he says, "and then tell me if you will that we have now the same words, the same thought as before; I will reply, 'Your arrangement suits the mind, it does not satisfy the ears'".

Turn now to such a passage as Cicero *Paradoxa* iii 26: "If an actor takes but a single step outside of the metre, or if his delivery of a verse makes it too long or too short by but a single syllable, he is hissed and clapped off the stage". Cf. the *Orator*, section 173: *In versu theatra tota exclamant, si fuit una syllaba aut brevior aut longior*. Now the average man knows nothing of feet; he does not understand rhythms; he does not realize what it is that has given him offence. Yet nature herself has lodged in our ears a power which enables us to judge quantities exactly as nature enables us to differentiate treble sounds from base. Lastly compare an interesting passage from the *De Oratore* iii 195, 196: "Let no one be astonished that men in no sense experts note all these things as they listen to a speech. Remember that here as elsewhere the power of nature is tremendous, aye past all belief. Though they have had absolutely no artistic or theoretical training, all men unconsciously in various branches of art and theory distinguish that which is flawless from that which is imperfect. This power they show in judging pictures, statutes, and other creations of the plastic and graphic arts, for the apprehension of which they have received relatively little assistance from nature. They show it in a much greater degree in criticising sounds, words, rhythms, for a certain appreciation of these things

¹ Norden (*Antike Kuntsprosa*, p 6) has called attention to the fact that the ancients systematically read aloud. We may add that works were frequently read aloud to them (cf. e.g. Nepos, *Atticus*, xiii 3; Pliny, *Epist.* iii 6 12) and that authors commonly dictated their writings to amanuenses.

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is part of the general equipment of the race. Nature's intention is that no man shall be completely destitute of understanding in these matters. Hence every man is sensitive not only to the artistic arrangement of words, but also to rhythmical effects. Few indeed there are that have any scientific understanding of numbers and measures. Yet if in these matters offense even of a most trifling sort has been given through undue prolongation or correction of a single syllable, whole theatres shout their protest".

It goes without saying that a people gifted with such a delicate appreciation of quantity, metrical effects based on quantity appealed with special force.

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